

2005 Report of Accomplishments

San Juan County Conservation District



Natural Resource Improvements in 2005 - Summary

- Completed 13 new farm/forest plans for local landowners incorporating best management practices that will reduce erosion, reduce contaminated runoff, improve soil quality, improve wildlife habitat, enhance groundwater recharge, and reduce fire risk.
- Continued “early warning” surface water quality monitoring program, examining 5 to 7 parameters in thirteen primary watersheds on three of the San Juan islands. Water quality is regularly monitored at 22 sites within those watersheds.
- Conducted San Juan County’s third cycle of the Watershed Stewards training program with 13 stewards completing the training on Orcas Island.
- Initiated restoration of the Port Stanley tidal lagoon and salt marsh on Lopez Island with funding and contracts in place for phase 1 site preparation and for fabrication of the new self-regulating tide gate that will be installed in the Fall of 2005.
- Continued the WHIP Garry Oak habitat restoration project on Cady Mountain, San Juan Island, covering 80 acres and engaging 12 cooperators.
- Funded and initiated a new Low Impact Development program focusing on the False Bay Watershed on San Juan Island.
- Implemented extensive public information and education program reaching approximately 120 individuals through workshops, 800 households through newsletters, 9,000 households (per month) through two monthly articles in local newspaper (“Natural Resource Questions” and “Build It Green”), 500 through the District website (www.sanjuanconservation.org), and 750 households through public displays.



Mission of the San Juan County Conservation District

To work with landowners and residents to develop sustainable land use practices that protect and conserve San Juan County’s soil and water for wildlife habitat, forestry, farming, residential, and other uses.

Water Quality Implementation

- Engaged 29 landowners in on-the-ground conservation planning and BMP implementation, assisting them with the following practices which are either implemented or planned/in progress:
 - 4,648 feet of fencing
 - 88 acres prescribed grazing
 - 92 acres use exclusion
 - .25 acres cover crop
 - 40 acres nutrient management
 - 3 manure composting or waste storage facilities
 - 2 roof runoff management systems
 - .25 acres of forest stand improvement
 - Other BMPs put in place or in progress: 3 heavy use areas with protection, brush management, waste utilization, and pest management.
- Provided general technical assistance to over 195 additional landowners/operators.

Basic Funding combined with Local Funding

- Maintained essential district operations—including board support, annual elections, financial management, required reporting and record keeping, basic operational infrastructure.
- Conducted the district’s third election-by-mail, continuing to increase the level of public participation.
- Leveraged additional district funding for conservation and stewardship projects totaling more than \$200,000.
- Supported district engagement in Natural Resources Conservation Service Local Work Group in an effort to secure additional NRCS financial and technical assistance for San Juan County landowners.

- *Prepared and submitted to the San Juan Board of County Commissioners the District's formal request for an assessment to support local conservation programs and projects.*

Puget Sound/Water Quality

- *Continued implementation of district-developed watershed plans for Swifts Bay, False Bay, and Westsound watersheds:*
 - *Surface water quality monitoring in progress on all three main islands;*
 - *Continued and expanded Low Impact Development efforts, focused on False Bay Watershed, promoting use of low impact principles and practices in land use, land development, and retrofit of existing development. Facilitating Green Builders Guild, Distributed 800 conservation folios to watershed landowners.*

Professional Engineering

- *Secured necessary permits for Port Stanley Lagoon/Salt Marsh restoration, let bids and contracts for phase 1 of the project.*
- *Continued to provide technical assistance for Deer Harbor estuary restoration project.*
- *Provided necessary engineering support for six RMS farm plans.*

Watershed Conservation/Habitat Restoration

- *Continued Garry Oak habitat restoration project, funded under the NRCS Wildlife Habitat Incentive Program—80 acres with 12 cooperators.*
- *Port Stanley Lagoon restoration initiated;*
- *Formed False Bay Watershed Action Team to select and design a model/demonstration restoration project.*

Small Farm Programs

- *All district farm assistance is directed to small farms (see Water Quality Implementation accomplishments). Assisted local farmers in securing EQIP contracts totaling nearly \$100,000.*
- *Addressed the growing natural resource risks from increasing numbers of small, noncommercial livestock operations (especially horses) by providing specialized workshops for this population and consultations for those considering acquisition of livestock.*
- *Two temporary cross-fencing kits (to demonstrate value of rotational grazing) consistently on loan; district manure spreader provided for use by local cooperators.*

Community Collaboration & Coordination

- *Continued ongoing collaboration with local school districts in conducting water quality monitoring on San Juan and Lopez Islands.*
- *Developed and presented collaborative workshops on backyard barnyards, green building,*
- *District Lead Entity Coordinator served on San Juan County Marine Resources Committee.*
- *District representative appointed to newly formed Agricultural Resource Committee.*

Information & Education

- *Watershed Stewards program continued to establish a population of citizen watershed advocates.*
- *Maintained an extensive public information and education program which included:*
 - *6 public workshops, conferences, or forums attended by 140 persons;*
 - *monthly natural resources question and answer column; monthly Build it Green column;*
 - *extensive and continuously updated district website;*
 - *semi-annual newsletter;*
 - *County fair booth;*
 - *conservation/stewardship folio.*

Washington Conservation Districts assisting land managers with their conservation choices

